

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the House of Representatives passed the conference report on the Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act. Voting No on final passage, Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03) issued the following statement:

"I support a robust national defense and I support our men and women in uniform but I ultimately had to oppose the conference report. The bill includes detention provisions that will allow the indefinite military detention without charge or trial of anyone, including U.S. citizens, accused or suspected of involvement with terrorism. These seemingly unconstitutional provisions have been rightly criticized by senior defense and national security officials as well as retired military leaders and counterterrorism professionals. Congress should provide the President with the tools to combat terrorism, but these tools must be within the letter and the spirit of the Constitution. "

Various current and former administration officials, as well as military personnel, voiced similar concerns. Some of these are listed below.

Secretary Panetta

"I am convinced we all want the same result- increased flexibility for our national security professionals in the field to detain, interrogate and prosecute suspected terrorists. The department has substantial concerns, however, about the revised text."

FBI Director Mueller

"This legislation may call into question the FBI's continued use or scope of its criminal investigative or national security authorities."

Lawrence Wilkerson, a retired U.S. Army colonel who served as State Department chief of staff in the Bush administration

"By limiting the use of the traditional criminal justice system -- and, specifically, the unparalleled experience and talent of the FBI and other domestic law enforcement officers -- the defense bill could actually weaken our counterterrorism efforts."

In a Letter Signed by 26 Retired Generals and Admirals

"Our leaders are constantly striving to make America more secure, but in doing so, we must be careful not to overreact and overreach, resulting in policies that will do more harm than good."

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